Wages of casual labourers in BSNL

*116. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the wages paid to the casual labourers employed in Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL);

(b) whether any all India wages have been determined and are being paid as per Government orders; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) Casual Labourers with Temporary Status are entitled to daily wages with reference to minimum of the pay scale of a regular Group 'D' official including DA, HRA, CCA and are also entitled for annual increments of the Pay Scale.

Casual Labourers without Temporary Status are entitled for daily wages at the rate of 1/30th of pay at the minimum of the relevant pay scale plus Dearness Allowance for work of 8 hours wherever engaged for work of regular nature. In case of casual labour engaged in intermittent or seasonal work, the casual labourers are entitled for wages as per the rates prescribed under the Minimum Wages Act.

(b) In view of (a) above, orders for all India Wages already exist.

(c) In view of (a) and (b) above, not applicable.

Depletion of ground water level

*117. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken note of the data provided by NASA satellite recorder showing depletion of groundwater level in northern India by as much as a foot per year;

(b) whether 70 per cent of India's irrigation needs and 80 per cent of domestic water supplies are now fully dependent on groundwater resources;

(c) whether Government would consider establishment of an agency like the Tennessee Valley Authority in US in the Brahmaputra basin to tap the abundant water resource in the North-East; and

(d) if so, by when a decision is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) In the article titled 'Satellite-based estimates of groundwater depletion in India' published in August, 2009 issue of scientific journal 'Nature' it has been indicated that groundwater is being depleted at a mean rate of 4.0 ± 1.0 cm yr^{-1} equivalent height of water (17.7 ± 4.5 km^3 yr^{-1}) over the Indian States of Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana (including Delhi).

As per the information provided by the States, 45% of the irrigation potential created is through ground water resources and about 47% of the irrigation potential utilized is through ground water. About 85% of the rural drinking water requirement has been assessed to be met from ground water resources.

The Government has constituted the Brahmaputra Board under the Brahmaputra Board Act, 1980 (No. 46 of 1980) for the planning and implementation of measures for the control of flood and bank erosion and matters connected therewith in Brahmaputra Valley.

Subsidized coverage of PDS

*118. DR. ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI:
SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Planning Commission intends to reduce the burden of subsidized coverage of Public Distribution System (PDS) by extrapolating the 2004 Planning Commission figures on the 2009 population size;

(b) if so, whether it will not dilute the concept of "inclusive growth" which the present UPA Government formed after a decisive mandate wants to achieve;

(c) the total amount allocated and spent on PDS, during 2006-07 and 2008-09, year-wise; and

(d) the projections for PDS allocation and expenditure during 2009-10?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) and (b) For allocation of food grains to States and UTs under Targetted PDS(TPDS), Department of Food and Public Distribution uses the number of BPL families based on 1993-94 poverty estimates of Planning Commission and population estimates of the Registrar General of India as on 1st March, 2000. This number of BPL families is 6.52 crore, which include 2.43 crore Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families. However, as reported by end of October, 2009, the State and UT Governments have issued 10.96 crore BPL ration cards, which includes 2.43 crore AAY cards. No steps have been taken by the Planning Commission to reduce the burden of subsidized coverage of PDS.

(c) Total food subsidy released during 2006-07 to 2008-09 is as under:—

(Rs. in crore)

Year	Subsidy released
2006-07	23,827.59
2007-08	31,259.68
2008-09	43,668.08